



ABUJA DATELINE

DECEMBER 2006

USAID, Banks provide mortgages, MSMEs financing for Nigerians

US Ambassador to Nigeria, John Campbell, recently played host to the U.S. Agency for International Development, Zenith Bank and Fidelity Bank as they launched a \$10 million project on mortgage finance and a \$5 million Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) scheme respectively.



From right, Ambassador Campbell, USAID Acting Deputy Mission Director Latanya Mapp-Frett with Apollos Ikpobe and Jim Ovia of Zenith Bank

The Development Credit Agreement (DCA) with Zenith will provide \$10 million in long term mortgage loans to low and middle income Nigerians to purchase primary residences in Abuja, Kano, Lagos and Port Harcourt. The MSME finance agreement with Fidelity Bank will provide long term credit to Nigerian entrepreneurs (agricultural

and non agricultural) for business start-ups, investment and working capital. The focus areas are the Niger Delta and Northern regions and Nigeria's commercial capital, Lagos.

In his remarks while welcoming Messrs. Jim Ovia and Reginald Ihejiani, chief executives of Zenith and Fidelity respectively, Ambassador Campbell noted that home ownership creates wealth and employment and reduces restiveness and poverty, thereby improving the livelihoods of Nigerians.

Put together by USAID's Partnership Office, the two projects demonstrate a deepening of the Nigerian financial sector which will stimulate further lending to the economy.

USAID has been working in Nigeria since the early 1960s and provides about \$150 million annually in development assistance in the areas of democracy and governance, agricultural development and economic growth, basic education, reproductive health, child survival, and HIV/AIDS.

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Lagos, Kano states sign agreements with Development Partners

Leading development partners in Nigeria, UK's Department for International Development (DFID), United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the World Bank formalized their development partnership with Lagos and Kano states recently.



British High Commissioner Richard Gozney, Eamon Cassidy (DFID), Gov. Ibrahim Shekarau, Pat Fleuret (USAID) and Hafez Ghanem (World Bank)

In Lagos, the partnership set out their intention to work with the state government in rebuilding Lagos as a model NEPAD city-state; improving agreed indicators of human development; strengthening public institutions to respond effectively to development challenges and demand from citizens; and promoting economic growth in the state.

Governor of Lagos State, Bola Tinubu, Eamon Cassidy, Head of DIFD Nigeria, Victoria Kwakwa, World Bank Lead Economist and Michael Satin, Chief Economist and Policy Advisor of USAID Nigeria, signed the Statement of Partnership Principles.

In his comments, Eamon Cassidy affirmed that the basis of the relationship between the partners is a shared commitment to poverty reduction in Lagos and the signing of the agreement provides the basis for the

development partners to work even more closely together towards this goal.

In a similar event at the Kano Liaison Office in Abuja, DFID, USAID and the World Bank also signed a Statement of Partnership Principles which formalized a development partnership between the state and the three agencies.

As in Lagos state, the partners will work with Kano state government in areas including, improving health and education indicators; promoting economic growth; and improving the effectiveness of state institutions in delivering services to the people.

Governor Ibrahim Shekarau of Kano State, Eamon Cassidy, Head of DIFD Nigeria, Hafez Ghanem, World Bank Country Director for Nigeria and Pat Fleuret - Mission Director, USAID/Nigeria, signed the document.

Emphasizing the importance of collaboration and coordination of development efforts to multiply the gains for Nigerian people, Hafez Ghanem expressed satisfaction in being able to partner with Nigerian states to bring about improvement in education, health and accelerate creation of jobs.

USAID / Shell / Bayelsa to provide opportunities for rural poor

A collaboration was established in Yenegoa, the Bayelsa state capital, recently between the United States Agency for International Development (USAID/Nigeria), Shell Petroleum Development Company and the Bayelsa State Government to improve livelihoods and service provision to the people of Bayelsa State and the Niger Delta.

Named the Bayelsa Partnership Initiative (BPI), the alliance will provide \$25 million for cassava production and processing; aquaculture value chain development; integrated HIV/AIDS service provision; and other development projects to be agreed upon by the partners. Of this money, \$10 million will be spent in Bayelsa State to improve the livelihoods of and services available to Bayelsa State residents.

Speaking at the inauguration of BPI, the state governor, Dr. Goodluck Jonathan stressed the importance of wealth creation for citizens of the state at community level where it is more evident to the citizenry.

With this partnership, USAID, Shell, and the Government of Bayelsa State will be contributing to the development objectives of improving livelihoods and improved health services. Through the agreed-upon activities, the partners will foster economic empowerment and improved health standards in Bayelsa State and the Niger Delta.

Gates Foundation on exploratory visit to Nigeria

Bill and Melinda Gates, along with some members of the Gates Foundation, visited staff of the United States Agency for International Development's Nigeria Mission in October to inquire how the foundation could assist development efforts in the region.

The three-day visit included a briefing by Mission staff in Nigeria's capital city of Abuja. Mission Director Pat Fleuret led a presentation on micro-credit, agriculture and health interventions in the country by USAID. The foundation, which has never worked in Nigeria, is interested in partnering with USAID to provide assistance in these areas.



Bill and Melinda Gates with the USG team

Nigeria has an estimated population of 140 million people of which about 55% live in rural areas. Three quarters of the rural

dwellers depend on agriculture for their livelihoods. Health care delivery presents an enormous challenge. The latest Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey estimated an infant mortality rate of 100 per 1,000 live births. With 65% of the population excluded from conventional banking services, close communal ties is an incentive for micro-credit interventions to combat poverty. The introduction of cellular technology (26m telephones) creates opportunities for the provision of M-Banking services for those who cannot access conventional banking services.

Foundation members were also briefed by staff from the United States Embassy including Deputy Chief of Mission, Tom Furey. Also present from the Gates' team was Sylvia Mathews, president of the Global Development Program; Rajiv Shah, in charge of Agricultural Development and Financial Services; and Steve Cramer, Senior Program Officer.

The group also visited a rice farm and a cassava farm, both run by the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA). The institute is one of USAID's implementing partners.

Six states receive TB/HIV collaborative support

The incidence of Tuberculosis in Nigeria is on the rise with the largest TB burden in Africa, it is believed that this communicable disease is the cause of more than 100,000 deaths yearly. It is a disease that needs serious attention.

However, seventy-two health workers from six states in Nigeria were trained to operate 36 Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS facilities using the Directly Observed Treatment Strategy (DOTS). Adamawa, Benue, Ebonyi, Ogun, Rivers and Sokoto states were provided with support to implement TB/HIV collaborative activities for 15 months spanning 2005 and 2006.

USAID provided funding to the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Federal Ministry of Health for this program. The

officers were trained to implement and effectively manage collaborative TB/HIV activities in their respective states.

HIV test kits were also procured in line with the national guidelines for testing 32,500 possible TB cases and patients. Drugs that fight common opportunistic infections in HIV positive people were used to treat 1,300 dually infected patients at the DOTS clinics.

Also, six community support groups were set up to identify and refer possible TB cases to the nearest DOTS centres for evaluation. This is done to enhance early case detection and prevention of morbidity and mortality from TB, which is the highest cause of death among people living with HIV/AIDS.

The overall result of this initiative is that there has been an increase in the number of TB patients who have access to HIV testing and other care services. Sokoto state Program Manager Sheu Tureta said it all when he described the DOTS implementation as “a dream come true”.

Regional Conflict Mitigation Councils inaugurated in five states

Five state Conflict Management and Mitigation Regional Councils (CMMRC) have been inaugurated in Kaduna, Delta, Rivers, Kano and Plateau states.

These CMMRCs will act as advisory bodies and will (a) work with at-risk youth to provide economic and social opportunities in their communities; (b) support and monitor the state's early warning system to identify potential violence and hot spots; and (c) take appropriate remedial actions in response to identified signs of conflicts using initiated peace negotiations and reconciliations / transformation between and among the conflicted parties.

Upon formation, each Regional Council will receive conflict management/mitigation and early warning training from CALM staff to enable them to recognize and respond to conflicts. Each Regional Council in each

state will be supported by a local NGO/CBO from that state. These NGOs/CBOs will be funded by the CALM project to provide logistical and administrative support and will work closely with members of the Regional Council, youth from the peace zones, community stakeholders and officials at the community level. These NGOs/CBOs will be involved in assisting in early warning data collection, analysis and responding to peace initiatives.



Members of Kaduna CMMRC

The establishment of the Regional Peace Councils is a culmination of the more than a year's work by IFESH to lay a solid foundation for the prevention and mitigation of conflicts in Nigeria's volatile states. Peace zones and peace clubs have been established in neighborhoods in the five states where youth are being prepared for alternative livelihoods.

In Kaduna state, the inauguration was presided over by Alhaji Mohamed Ahmed Makarfi, Governor of Kaduna state. Twenty organizations from across the state responded to the Conflict Abatement through Local Mitigation (CALM) program to nominate representatives to serve on this Committee. USAID is providing support for CALM through International Foundations for Education and Self Help (IFESH), one of its implementing partners.

SITE VISIT

Massey Children's Hospital

Nigeria's oldest children's hospital - Massey Street Children's Hospital, Lagos – now provides pediatric anti-retroviral (ARV) services to various clients who come from Lagos, other states and even Nigeria's next-door neighbor, Benin Republic.

The 92 year old hospital is benefiting from a scale-up in pediatric ARV services provided several children's facilities through the USAID-funded Global HIV/AIDS Initiative in Nigeria (GHAIN) project.

Through the efforts of Drs. Ajoke Akande and Abieyuwa Emokpaye, using the 'family centered' model, Massey Street has evolved from a pediatrics-only center to a family treatment centre. The physicians there are trained in both adult and pediatric ARV treatment, such that the hospital has become a one stop center for the whole family. Massey Street staff also introduced aggressive case finding, counseling and testing mechanisms. This has resulted in the enrolment of 700 minors into care at the hospital.

Any child who comes in contact with the facility is offered counseling and testing along with their parents. All patients in the accident and emergency department and new admissions are also offered voluntary counseling and testing along with the accompanying adult. The result is that 60% of mothers have been tested at this erstwhile pediatrics-only facility. 80% of children coming in contact with the hospital also have accepted HIV counseling and testing. There are five nurses and social workers who have been trained to conduct the HIV/AIDS rapid test by finger prick and to provide same day results.

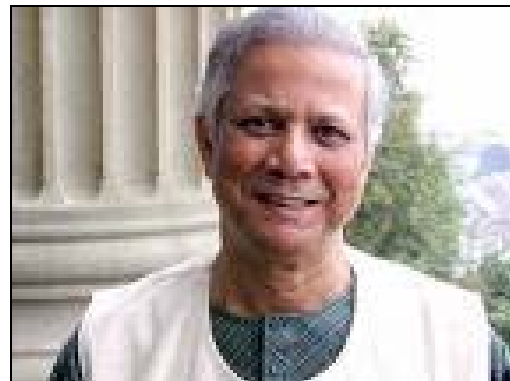
FACT
UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT
PARTNERS PROVIDED HIV-RELATED
PALLIATIVE CARE TO 210,836
NIGERIANS FROM OCTOBER 2005 TO
SEPTEMBER 2006

Massey Street hospital also runs a full scale TB/HIV clinic where all children diagnosed as having tuberculosis are tested for HIV. So far, approximately 50% of the TB-infected children tested are HIV positive.

Nestled in the very heart of Lagos, Massey Street is a 125 bed facility which has scaled up the provision of ARV services to Nigerian children. The hospital was chosen as a center to provide anti-retroviral services for Nigerian children under the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR).

Micro-credit: The year of awards

For providing micro-credit to more than 65,000 clients, Lift Above Poverty Organization (LAPO), a Nigerian micro-credit institution, has won this year's edition of the Grameen Foundation Excellence in Microfinance Award.



Muhammad Yunus

LAPO is a major beneficiary of USAID, which has provided both technical and financial assistance through its PRISMS (Promoting Improved Sustainable Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise Financial Services) project. Over the years assistance has included training, product development and providing access to International Guarantee Funds which in turn assured loans from local banks.

The award is bestowed on organizations that use microfinance as an effective tool in the fight against poverty. LAPO was established as an antidote to harsh economic policies in the 1980s which had a strident effect on low income earners. From

a start-up capital of \$150 in the village of Ogwashi-Ukwu in Delta state, the microfinance firm has spread to eight states in the country and an annual turnover of \$16.2 million.

In another development, Norway's Nobel Committee has awarded this year's Nobel Peace Prize jointly to Muhammad Yunus and the Grameen Bank, both of Bangladesh, for their efforts to build economic and social infrastructure from below. Dr. Yunus founded the Grameen Bank in 1976 to provide small loans and other financial services for the poor – mostly women – to start businesses and escape poverty. Over the years, the bank's network of partners has spread to about 2.2 million families in more than 20 countries. Grameen also has a more than 90% repayment rate on loans disbursed.

In announcing the award, Professor Ole Danbolt, head of the Norwegian Nobel Committee, observed that "Sustainable peace cannot be given unless large numbers of people have the opportunity to get out of poverty. Development such as this is useful in human rights and democracy."



Through NGOs, credit unions and other financial institutions, USAID is currently funding nearly four million entrepreneurs and households worldwide. Women, who would normally not have access to formal channels of financing, are specifically targeted in these programs.

Traditional rulers join Anti-Trafficking campaign

Women Trafficking and Child Labour Eradication Foundation (WOTCLEF), a Nigerian non-governmental organization, partners with USAID's ADVANCE project, implemented by Pact Inc. in the fight against human trafficking in Nigeria.

The organization is propagating its anti-trafficking awareness campaign to Osun state in southern Nigeria.



Oba Alo of Ilo receiving members of WOTCLEF's Osun state chapter

Support was sought and received from some traditional rulers in the state. Recognizing that poverty is a major cause of trafficking, His Majesty, Kabiyesi Oba Taiwo Aribisala, Elegboro of Ijebu-Jesa of Osun State, donated farmland to the WOTCLEF project to train secondary school students to farm and be economically empowered, making them less susceptible to trafficking. The ruler also permitted the use of the Ijebu-Jesa town hall as a workshop venue. Other rulers in the state donated various items including a computer training center.

Pact Inc. manages the Advocacy for Awareness and Civic Empowerment (ADVANCE) project for USAID/Nigeria. The project is focused on strengthening civil society and best democratic practices in the country.

Avian Influenza update

The United States Agency for International Development has provided a grant worth one million dollars to the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO of the United Nations) for a one year program of support and training to strengthen the Nigerian government's ability to respond to Avian Influenza and other animal diseases communicable to humans.

In a related development, four shipping containers of additional emergency supplies provided by USAID are to arrive in Nigeria

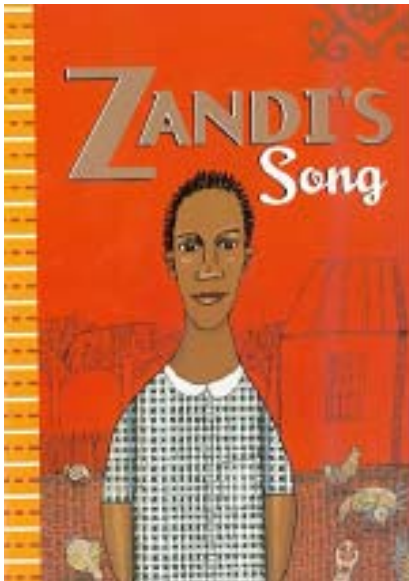
and be cleared for distribution early January of 2007.

In addition to the grant to FAO and emergency response supplies, USAID is providing other ongoing assistance such as special training to teach veterinary experts how to maximize the use of donated emergency supplies.

Included are 30,000 sets of personal protective suits, 300 disinfectant packs with sprayers and disinfectant and field test kits for testing for the presence of highly pathogenic Avian Influenza.

With other USG partners, USAID is also in the process of translating Avian Influenza educational materials into Hausa for schools in the North. The name of the School materials kit is Zandi's Song, which is a story of how a girl prepared her family to respond to Avian Influenza.

The Federal Ministry of Information has recently developed some TV jingles to help provide social awareness of how to respond to Avian Influenza. Examples of such jingles are: *"Fighting bird flu protects fowls and You"*.



Cover of the AI children's book 'Zandi's Song'

SUCCESS STORIES

USAID's COMPASS brings student testing technology to Nigeria

Dozens of Nigerian scorers pored over heaps of pupil workbooks in a large conference hall--about the only space that could embrace a task as daunting as the scoring of 16,044 student achievement tests.

When USAID and the Government of Nigeria launched the Community Participation for Action in the Social Sector (COMPASS) project in mid-2004, the partnership took on the challenge of implementing the largest integrated intervention to date in Nigeria's education and health sectors. The project also heralded new possibilities for evaluating its impact on the quality of basic education in Nigeria through comparing performance trends in schools over the five-year life of the project.

According to UNICEF, most countries rely on academic examinations to determine student competency. Only a few measure student achievement to assess and improve their educational systems. Nigeria recently joined this league through the COMPASS project.

For the first time ever in Nigeria, rigorous scientific student achievement testing was conducted to assess the impact of interventions in improving math proficiency and English literacy. Carried out by COMPASS in June 2006, the assessment took place in 170 schools in the three states of Kano, Nasarawa and Lagos, and in the Federal Capital Territory. 32,088 pupils, 888 teachers, and 170 head teachers participated in the recent exercise, producing massive numbers of pupil workbooks and questionnaires for scoring.

The testing was conducted to assess how pupil literacy and numeracy performance in COMPASS-supported schools compare with other schools, and how performance trends compare from one grade to the next throughout the life of the project.

The process also involved five separate training events and preparation of a step-by-step checklist and scoring guide to be distributed to test administrators and scorers.



Will it be an 'A' or...

Several measures were taken to assure the reliability and consistency of scoring by teams. Periodically scored papers were reviewed to assure that scorers were using the scoring guides in a consistent manner.

The results of the June 2006 student achievement testing will serve as the baseline against which results from subsequent tests over the next three years of the COMPASS project can be used to measure effectiveness and attribution of COMPASS interventions. The COMPASS/Nigerian Government partnership focuses on teacher training at in-service and pre-service levels, interactive radio instruction as a teacher training tool and to enhance literacy and numeracy skills of primary school pupils, development and distribution of instructional materials, sub-grants to PTAs for school improvement to enhance enrolment and retention and health and nutritional activities.

How a little village went big on reform

Eighty-five kilometers from Nigeria's capital lies Dari, a rural settlement with a population of 5,000. Serving the community's children is an old school building, which, until quite recently, was just about redundant. As in

many other Nigerian communities, most Dari parents encouraged their daughters to seek menial jobs in the Federal Capital Territory. Typically, street "hawking" by girls of school age became a common way to supplement family incomes, effectively depriving these girls of the opportunity to attend school.

Ten-year-old Hadiza Abdullahi (not her real name) recounted her first experience: "I was forced to work under hard conditions, such as carrying heavy loads, washing, and other dirty jobs just to make money. Sometimes, I couldn't find a place to sleep." Hadiza is just one of many girls who are looking for an improved quality of life. Another 10-year-old, Mairo Sule (not her real name), said: "I was involved in an accident. I almost died, and there was nobody to take care of me. There was not enough food, and yet I couldn't spend the little money I had made because I had to bring good money back home."

The migratory habits of these children negatively affected enrollment and retention of pupils at the community school in Dari. Compounding the problem was the lack of a platform for community members to discuss and resolve common issues. Recognizing this gap, the USAID-funded Community Participation for Action in the Social Sector (COMPASS) project helped to establish a community coalition including teachers, parents, farmers, traders, and service providers to identify and resolve health and education problems facing the Dari community. COMPASS utilized a participatory approach which encouraged coalition members to engage actively in developing and implementing solutions, which often included fund-raising or generating volunteer labor.

As eight-year-old Rakiya Haruna (not her real name) prepared to begin hawking with her peers in Nigeria's capital, news reached her that fate had made a positive intercession on her behalf. During a community coalition meeting, members had discussed the problem of low school enrollment and migration, as well as their environment.

Parents resolved to send their children to school, and forbade menial jobs during school hours, encouraging others in the

community to follow their example. In addition, community members agreed to hold cleanup exercises every month. Now the community environment is improved, and members are even taking turns to clean the school. Also, teachers from Dari Science Primary School are improving their teaching skills through the COMPASS teacher-training program and an innovating program of interactive radio instruction.



Hadiza and Mairo

School enrollment in Dari has almost doubled, increasing from 376 to 687 pupils, almost half of whom are girls. Citizens of Dari are pleased with the changes they have created for themselves and their children. As community leader Wakayi Bawa says, "If a stranger enters your house and tells you your house is dirty, it does not mean he dislikes you; he only wants you to make amends."

FIRST PERSON 1 **HIV/AIDS does not discriminate, nor do we**

"Minna is the capital of Niger state and like the rest of northern Nigeria, it is a predominantly Muslim community. It is, however, one of the few settlements in the region with a large Christian community.

"Holy Family Parish Adunu falls under the auspices of the Catholic Diocese of Minna, one of the eight dioceses receiving support from the USAID funded Catholic Relief Services (CRS/Nigeria) HIV/AIDS community-based care and support project. The Holy Family Parish Action Committee on HIV/AIDS (PACA) was established in late 2004 and currently has 10 volunteers



actively involved in awareness creation, health education, mobilization of community members towards positive behavior and action towards HIV/AIDS, and provision of voluntary and confidential counseling and testing (VCCT) services.

"Through PACA, the community-based care and support project aims to mitigate the impact of HIV/AIDS among members of Adunu community irrespective of their tribe or religion. To this end, the church, which is situated a few meters away from the Adunu community mosque, sought out and involved Muslim faithful in the parish's HIV/AIDS prevention activities. The chairman of the Adunu PACA, Mr. Philip Dogonyaro and the Parish Priest, Rev Fr. Abraham Abui, met with the District Head and Muslim leader of Adunu, Alhaji Shuaibu S. Noma, to chart a way forward for HIV/AIDS prevention activities for the community.

"Evidently, both groups have been living in harmony as each group is full of praise for the other for their understanding, support and team spirit. In the same vein, the PACA has also provided HIV/AIDS awareness services to the Adunu parish of the Evangelical Churches of West Africa (ECWA).

"After all, HIV does not discriminate, why should we?"

PACA members with parish priest Reverend Father Abraham Abui (with T shirt) and an assistant to the Muslim head

Testimonial of Dooshima Gbahabo, MPH, Catholic Relief Services HIV/AIDS Program Manager

FIRST PERSON 2 **I am a 'Home Based Carer'**

"I am a middle-aged man from the southern part of Nigeria though I presently reside in the north where I own a drug store. I heeded the call by my parish to join the PACA (Parish Action Committee on AIDS) in 2004.

However, I did not bargain for all the experiences that begin to unfold with time. After registration with PACA, we underwent an in-house training where I was transformed into a Home Based Carer volunteer. The nightmare then began.

“Being a rural area, I was not accepted and worse still people stared at me as if I was doing some thing obscene. I was not allowed into most homes and worse still to talk to women. We then devised a strategy whereby I tagged along on visits with the Chairman of PACA who is an indigene of that area and quite popular too.

“Slowly people started getting used to me. My first client is late now, but she got so used to me that she would want me to visit her every other day. As a PACA member, one is labeled. People here think one has to be infected to volunteer his/her services for other sick ones.

“I have 15 clients now and I am their best friend. They call me ‘Home Base’ so also the community members, I don’t mind. My wife does not either. What has reinforced my acceptance by the community is that I assist them a lot from my drugs store. I love my contribution to the service of humanity. I thank God!”

Testimonial of HBC Parish AIDS Volunteer Gabriel I. Ezema of Saint John’s Parish, Kachia, Kaduna. Kaduna Archdiocese has a total of 48 parishes.

OUR PARTNERS 1



Founded in 1975, the Centre for Development and Population Activities (CEDPA) is an internationally recognized non-profit organization that improves the lives of women and girls in developing countries. CEDPA's programs increase educational opportunities for girls and youth; ensure access to lifesaving reproductive health information and services; and strengthen women's ability to become leaders in their communities and nations. Through sub-grants and technical assistance to local partners, CEDPA

strengthens community organizations for lasting change.

Since CEDPA started its work in Nigeria in 1985, it has empowered women to advocate for improved reproductive health and HIV/AIDS information and services. In addition, CEDPA/Nigeria has focused on building women's leadership skills and raising women's political participation.

In June, 2006, CEDPA entered into a partnership with the United States Government, USAID and the American people, through the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), to provide community-based palliative care and prevention services through faith- and community-based non-governmental organizations in Nigeria. This Cooperative Agreement-based project, entitled *Positive Living*, is an ambitious four-year partnership and is designed to reach up to 3,600,000 people with Abstinence and Be Faithful messages; provide 700,000 persons with condoms and other prevention methods; make available community/home-based palliative care services to 108,000 persons living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHAs); train more than 28,000 community-based palliative care health professionals and home-based-care volunteers and 30,000 prevention peer educators; orient 200 staff from partner organizations in effective management systems; and establish more than 100 service delivery outlets for palliative care and HIV/AIDS prevention. *Positive Living* works in close partnership with the Global HIV/AIDS Initiative Nigeria (GHAIN) project of Family Health International among others, providing community-led and implemented palliative care and prevention services while GHAIN and others provide advanced clinical support. *Positive Living* will work in twelve states throughout the country and is CEDPA's largest project in Nigeria.

OUR PARTNERS 2



In sub-Saharan Africa, young people aged 15-24 account for half of all new HIV infections. Young women in this age group

are three times more likely to be infected compared to their male peers. A large proportion of Nigerian girls are married during adolescence, especially in the North where early marriage is a common feature, yet few programs are in place to support this sizeable and vulnerable group. These young girls have very little decision-making power within their households.

Once married these girls are under intense pressure to get pregnant which accounts for early sexual initiation and increased exposure to risk of HIV infection. In 2004 research conducted by the Population Council in collaboration with the Adolescent Health and Information Projects (AHIP) based in Kano that included secondary analysis of the 2004 Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) revealed that although the northern region has the highest percentage of sexually active girls, most of the sexual activity is within marriage which can nonetheless be risky. Factors that place these girls at increased risk for HIV infection compared to their unmarried sexually active counterparts include increased unprotected sexual frequency and partners who are considerably more sexually experienced and more likely to be HIV+. Many youth-focused programs tend to ignore this group of vulnerable, at-risk girls who are in urgent need of HIV information, counseling and linkage to services, especially VCT, PMTCT, ART and other reproductive health services.

The *HIV Prevention Project for Vulnerable Youth in Northern Nigeria* that began in December 2005 is a USAID-funded program managed by the Population Council/Abuja designed to reduce the incidence of early marriage and prevent new HIV infections by promoting mutual faithfulness and abstinence where possible through strengthening the capacities of local Nigerian organizations, including faith-based, working with this large, vulnerable and neglected category of youth. Specifically the four-year PEPFAR supported program will strengthen the capacity and sustainability of three Nigerian multiplier partner organizations to design, plan, manage, support, monitor and expand HIV prevention activities for young people in the following eight focus states: Adamawa, Bauchi, Benue, Borno, FCT-Abuja, Kano,

Nasarawa, and Niger. Working in partnership with the Adolescent Health Information Project (AHIP), the Federation of Muslim Women's Associations (FOMWAN) and the Islamic Education Trust (IET) the project will implement four strategies that include capacity building and training; assisting religious, community, and women leaders to promote dialogue on HIV risks and child marriage in their communities through outreach and awareness/sensitization activities; creating demand for premarital and couples' VCT by expanding counseling, pre-counseling and referrals to other service providers; and creating and establishing girls' clubs for married adolescent girls and clubs for their husbands that include HIV prevention education, health, hygiene and pregnancy related education and referral for VCT, PMTCT, ART and other reproductive health services.

These activities are designed to reach vulnerable adolescent girls in three groups: 1) girls who are not yet married, 2) girls in the process of marriage, and 3) married adolescent girls. The three partner organizations will conduct *Days of Dialogue*, two-day educational training sessions and discussions with women, community and religious leaders (Christians and Muslims) on issues related to child marriage, the delay of sexual initiation and risk among unmarried girls by promoting social change, RH, HIV risks, etc. Subsequently five-day intensive advocacy training workshops will be held with committed leaders identified during the two-day training to raise awareness among parents, youth and husbands on HIV risks associated with early marriage and promote premarital and couples' VCT as a way to prevent the potential transmission of HIV between discordant couples and promote mutual faithfulness within marriage. Issues such as creating the demand for VCT services and appropriate referrals are also covered while subsequent training is provided to lay counselors who will train new advocates in premarital counseling and demand creation.

A total of 600 community leaders will be trained during the first year of project implementation. To date, 478 community leaders have been trained and outreach has

been made to 139,236 of the total of 227,275 expected to be reached during the first year of the project. At the end of four years trained advocates will have reached approximately 675,000 people with messages related to later, safer marriages, mutual faithfulness, and premarital VCT.

WORLD AIDS DAY 1



From Randall L. Tobias, Director of U.S. Foreign Assistance and USAID Administrator

KEEPING THE PROMISE ON WORLD AIDS DAY

Washington, DC -- Partnerships – large and small, public and private, local and global – are a key ingredient in the global fight against HIV/AIDS. For the past 20 years, the U.S. Government has provided assistance to those infected and affected by HIV/AIDS in the developing world, where nearly 40 million people are living with the disease. Today, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) is proud to continue its contributions to the battle against the pandemic as a key partner in the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, supporting the most complex HIV/AIDS prevention, care and treatment strategies in the world. The international theme for World AIDS Day this year is *Stop AIDS: Keep the Promise*, and the United States is doing just that. The Emergency Plan has already achieved enormous success in rapidly increasing access to antiretroviral drugs to combat AIDS, an approach that was successful because of its focus on partnership. Indeed, the promise of these partnerships is to support nations in developing the capacity that will allow

communities to sustain their efforts for generations to come. Through the Emergency Plan, USAID partnerships are supporting key activities such as:

- In **South Africa**, where the *Men as Partners* program deals with HIV/AIDS prevention issues that include masculinity, stigma, and domestic violence. Men are encouraged to assume a larger share of responsibilities for family and community care by spending more time with their children, mentoring young boys in the community, and visiting terminally ill AIDS patients.
- In **Haiti**, where USAID partners with the Haitian artists organization, Promoteurs Objectif Zero SIDA, to produce a series of collages depicting the lives of people living with HIV/AIDS and their families. During stigma and discrimination workshops, participants create inspiring works of art describing their experiences with HIV/AIDS and their hopes for the future. The collaboration fosters special friendships that promote open and honest discussion.
- In **Thailand**, where the USAID-supported *Positive Partnerships* program matches people who have HIV with those who are not infected and provides them with vocational training, and helps them start small businesses together. The program also supports home-based care to hundreds of HIV-positive residents in Bangkok.
- In **Ukraine**, where USAID is equipping medical staff with the skills that allow more people to receive voluntary counseling and testing in order to decrease mother-to-child transmission of HIV. USAID trains obstetricians and midwives and also works to strengthen community-based support for HIV-positive pregnant women and mothers.

These are just a few examples of exceptional in-country programs that are building on the success of local ownership, leadership and the commitment to invest in people. Today at USAID, we reaffirm our commitment to keep the promise – the promise of fighting HIV/AIDS, one partnership at a time.

WORLD AIDS DAY 2

USAID/SAFE BLOOD FOR AFRICA blood donation drive

Safe Blood for Africa Foundation held a blood donation drive and health talk at USAID to commemorate World AIDS Day. The activity was to promote voluntary, non-remunerated blood donation among staff working for US government agencies in Abuja, and to increase the amount of safe

blood available for transfusion thereby reducing HIV transmission.

The drive was part of the activities to commemorate the World AIDS Day in Abuja. While encouraging blood donation to save lives, the coordinator of the National Blood Transfusion Service, Dr. Folake Ayo, informed the audience that centers had been established in Abuja, Kaduna, Owerri and Ibadan.

She also noted that over 5,000 units of blood had been collected in the last two years. 19 more units were donated at this occasion.

Please enjoy the story of our World Aids Day from the pictures below.



Team Leader Karen Kasan welcoming guests



Listening to the health talk



USAID's Sophia Mukasa Monico demonstrating the use of female condom at the exhibition stand



Zainab Mohammed, Alheri Ahmed, Toyin Dairo and Kemi Sokenu-Morris all of Safe Blood Africa Foundation



At the blood donation center



Mission Director Pat Fleuret donating blood

And at Eagle Square, Abuja...



On December 1, President Olusegun Obasanjo became the first African head of state to demonstrate commitment to the eradication of HIV/AIDS by publicly undergoing the HIV/AIDS test at the World AIDS Day in Abuja. Above President Obasanjo is being 'prepped' for the test. At hand to counsel and test the President was FHI Nigeria's Senior Counseling and Testing Advisor Simon Cartier.

PHOTO PAGE

Ray Jennings' Send-Forth



PEPFAR Contracting Officer Ray Jennings returned to USAID/W recently after perhaps the longest tour of duty in the Nigerian Mission – he spent eight months! During his stay, the whole USAID/Nigeria family was charmed by the gentleman's demeanor and that unforgettable smile that can only be Ray's. Above left is a photo of Ray being 'stunned' with the USAID/Nigeria Corporate Power-Clap, while Mission Director Pat Fleuret leads others in coming to his rescue. Right: Ray with colleagues.

...And Carol Hart too.



COMPASS Chief of Party Carol Hart moved on recently. For the last three years, she played a pivotal role in improving the quality of health and social services to Nigerians. In the left photograph, she appears with Dr. Daniel Gana (President, Nigerian Medical Association) and USAID Mission Director Pat Fleuret, who hosted Carol to a send-forth dinner. Also, friends Ruth Buckley, Dick Cook and Carol tuck it in with hostess Anne Fleuret.



From left, Dave Nwachukwu, Consultant to Ebonyi state, Margaret Pollock, REFORMS chief of party, Ebonyi state governor Sam Egwu, USAID deputy mission director Natalie Freeman, Prof. Chigozie Ogbu, deputy governor of Ebonyi State and Eke Uka (USAID) after signing an MOU with Ebonyi state.

ABUJA DATELINE is the electronic newsletter of USAID/Nigeria. The journal publishes information on programs implemented by USAID and its local and international partners. To request copies of this newsletter, please contact Egun Aleshinloye at ealeshinloye@usaid.gov